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OSA-4525/66

22 December 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy for Operations, OSA

SUBJECT : COMOR Briefing on "H" Model Drone

1. At today's meeting of COMOR, Lt.Col. R. R. Smith, J-3, JRC, presented at the request of [redacted] a briefing on the improved BLUE SPRINGS drone, the [redacted] Colonel Smith prefaced his presentation with the remark that there were two misconceptions concerning the "H" model which he would like to clear up. First, he stated that the "H" model was not designed to replace or augment any manned or satellite system, but rather to provide an "alternative" to present reconnaissance assets. Secondly, the "H" model is not a follow-on, but merely another progression in the development of the basic [redacted] series, which started with the "A" model.

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2. The new model is still carried by the C-130, which has a capability of launching two drones. The "G" model Doppler navigation system is retained. Ten missions have been flown in the test program so far, and all phases have been satisfactory except for some problems with engine overheating. The manufacturer believes that this is basically an EGT trim problem and a successful test flight earlier this week seemed to bear this out. If it is indicated that this problem is solved, ten to fifteen drones are now "on the dock" ready for shipment to Southeast Asia.

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3. Colonel Smith provided the following delivery data on the [redacted]

	1966 O N D	1967 J F M A M J J	
First Buy	2 7 8	6 4 5 3	TOTAL 35
Second Buy		3 3 3 3 3	TOTAL 15
			TOTAL 50

NRO and USAF review(s) completed.

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Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

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4. Operational characteristics:

	"H" Model	"G" Model
Wing area	114 sq. ft.	80 sq. ft.
Length	29.89 ft.	31 ft.
Span	32	
Weight	3741 lbs.	
Fuel	1369.5 gal.	
Range	About 2400 NM	About 1400 NM
Initial cruise altitude - 200 miles after launch	60,800	57,800
Final cruise altitude - "fuel out" point	69,000	

Colonel Smith stated that several tests had seen altitudes "well over 70,000", but indicated that the cruise/climb 60,800 - 69,000 were what the planners were using now. When questioned about vulnerability, he stated that the increase in altitude made interception by MIGs more difficult, and that the new operating regime for a large portion of the flight above the contrail level was perhaps the biggest gain.

5. The "H" is configured with a Hycon camera with a resolution averaging 2.5 feet, about the same capability as the present "G" model. As an aside, he stated that under certain conditions resolution down to one foot had been seen but that 2.5' represented "average performance". The following comparison figures were supplied:

	"H" Model	"G" Model
Camera resolution	2.5'	2.5'
Longitudinal Coverage	817 nm	300 nm
Lateral Coverage	22.7 nm	About 20 nm
Forward overlap	60%	60%
Vertical frame dimension	4.3 nm	About 4 nm

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The camera is a 9x9" format operating with a 24" focal length. The utilization of thin base film increases the longitudinal coverage some 500nm, and other coverage figures increase because of increase in operational altitude.

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7. Concluding his remarks, Colonel Smith indicated that the take handling and operational control of the "H" model would be the same as the present BLUE SPRINGS. He also remarked that JRC viewed as primary mission for the "H" reconnaissance coverage of China. Displaying a graphic showing the 2400 mile range from Danang, he did not mention any planned operations [redacted] He then stated that in the future [redacted] might be coming to COMOR for guidance on desired target coverage [redacted]

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Chief, Intelligence Division
Office of Special Activities

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